

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----058428 101711Z /41

O 101636Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4008

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 03912

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FOR ATHERTON IN NEA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PEPR, XF, US, UK  
SUBJECT: ATHERTON MEETING WITH WEIR IN FCO IN LONDON  
ON MARCH 9 - /

1. FOLLOWING RELATIVELY BRIEF MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN AFTERNOON OF MARCH 9, ATHERTON ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR BRIEFED FCO ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY WEIR ON MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LATEST SHUTTLE MISSION AND STATUS OF US MEDIATION EFFORT. ATHERTON SAID THAT THE THREE PRINCIPAL ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION DURING BEGIN'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON WOULD PROBABLY BE:

- A) ESTABLISHING THE PRINCIPLE THAT UNSC RESOLUTION 242 CALLED FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON ALL THREE FRONTS;
- B) A US ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN ISRAELI AGREEMENT ON COMPROMISE LANGUAGE FOR THE PALESTINIAN PARAGRAPH IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ALONG THE LINES OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S FORMULATION AT ASWAN; AND
- C) A FREEZE ON FURTHER ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY.

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2. ATHERTON STATED THAT THE MAIN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS MISSION OF THE LAST TWO AND A HALF WEEKS HAD BEEN TO DEFINE THE ISSUES MORE CLEARLY AND SHARPLY. WITH REGARD TO THE DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, THE EGYPTIANS HAVE SIGNIFIED THAT IF THE LANGUAGE REGARDING PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN SELF-DETERMINATION CAN BE RESOLVED ALONG THE LINES OF THE PRESIDENT'S ASWAN STATE-

MENT, THE EGYPTIANS COULD BE MORE FLEXIBLE ON THE LANGUAGE COVERING WITHDRAWAL. IN THE END THE EGYPTIANS MAY NOT INSIST ON THE PHRASE "INADMISSIBILITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY WAR." IF THE EGYPTIANS WERE TO DROP THIS, THEY WOULD PROBABLY AT A MINIMUM INSIST THAT ISRAEL ACCEPT THE PHRASE "WITH ALL ITS PARTS" WITH REFERENCE TO RESOLUTION 242. AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, THE EGYPTIANS WANT TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT COMES OF THE BEGIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

3. THE US HAS TWO ALTERNATIVES: A) WAIT FOR THE EGYPTIANS TO COME UP WITH A COUNTER-PROPOSAL FOR THE DECLARATION; OR B) PRESENT A US PROPOSAL. THE LATTER ALTERNATIVE WOULD BRING ON A NEW CRUNCH, AND THE US BELIEVES THIS IS PREMATURE AT THE MOMENT. WE ALSO SOUGHT TO GET THE EGYPTIANS TO MOVE ON TO DISCUSSIONS OF AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT FOR THE WEST BANK. THE EGYPTIANS, HOWEVER, WERE RELUCTANT TO BE DRAWN OUT ON THIS. ATHERTON SAID THE ISRAELIS WERE SENSITIVE TO THE IDEA OF A PLEBISCITE, WHICH THEY BELIEVE WOULD OPEN THE DOOR FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE. THEY PREFER THAT THE DISCUSSIONS THEMSELVES, INVOLVING PALESTINIANS, WOULD BE CONSIDERED THE PROCESS FOR SELF-DETERMINATION. IF THERE IS TO BE ANY KIND OF CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED, IT WOULD BE AT THE END OF THE FIVE-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. WE BELIEVE IT  
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IMPORTANT TO DEVISE A MECHANISM TO ENSURE THAT THE PLO OR OTHER EXTREME ELEMENTS NOT ATTAIN POLITICAL POWER.

4. DESPITE JORDANIAN IDEAS OF A UN-ADMINISTERED INTERIM ARRANGEMENT, THERE WILL BE NO WAY TO GET THE ISRAELIS COMPLETELY OUT OF THE WEST BANK BEFORE THE END OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. WE CAN NOT REALISTICALLY EXPECT THE ISRAELIS TO GIVE UP THEIR MILITARY POSITIONS IN THE WEST BANK UNTIL THEY KNOW WHAT KIND OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENT THEY ARE GETTING IN A FINAL SETTLEMENT; HOWEVER, THE ISRAELI MILITARY DO NOT SEEM TO BE INTERESTED IN A PERMANENT MILITARY OCCUPATION - THEY WANT ONLY TO KEEP KEY SURVEILLANCE SITES AND MILITARY POSITIONS.

5. ATHERTON SAID HE HAD POINTED OUT TO THE ARABS THAT THE BEGIN PLAN HAD MADE SOME SWEEPING PROPOSALS: A) AS REGARDS THE SINAI, IT PROPOSED RESTORATION OF THE

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PRE-1967 BORDERS, AND B) IN THE WEST BANK IT DOES  
OFFER AN END TO MILITARY GOVERNMENT. IT THUS DOES  
IN OUR VIEW CONSTITUTE A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND  
THE ARABS, INSTEAD OF JUST COMPLAINING ABOUT IT,  
SHOULD COME UP WITH THEIR OWN COUNTER-PROPOSALS.

6. WITH REGARD TO THE BEGIN REGIME, THE FORTHCOMING  
DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON COULD EITHER: A) IF CONFRON-  
TATIONAL, PRODUCE A CONSOLIDATION OF DOMESTIC SUPPORT  
FOR BEGIN IN ISRAEL AS REACTION, OR B) IF DELICATELY  
HANDLED, NOURISH THE IDEA IN THE ISRAELI PUBLIC THAT  
BEGIN IS MISSING THE MAIN OPPORTUNITY IN A GENERATION  
FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. WE SHOULD NOT BE PERCEIVED  
AS LOWERING THE BOOM ON ISRAEL. WE CAN NOT EXPECT  
TO MAKE THE ISRAELIS GIVE GREAT CONCESSIONS IN ONLY  
TWO DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS. THUS, THE BEGIN VISIT MAY NOT  
PRODUCE IMMEDIATE OR DRAMATIC RESULTS, BUT IT WILL  
MAKE CLEAR TO THE ISRAELIS THAT WE CAN NOT PAPER  
OVER DIFFERENCES.

7. ATHERTON CONTINUED THAT WE THINK SADAT MEANS  
WHAT HE SAYS WHEN HE REITERATES THAT BY OCTOBER HE  
MUST MAKE A JUDGMENT AS TO WHETHER HE CAN COUNT ON  
THE US MEDIATION EFFORT AS SERIOUS. WEIR WAS MORE  
INCLINED TO THINK THAT SADAT MIGHT BE THINKING OF

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A POLITICAL PLOY LIKE NASSER'S OFFER TO RESIGN IN 1967.

8. ATHERTON THEN BRIEFLY REVIEWED HIS MEETING WITH SAUD IN GENEVA. SAUD, NORMALLY A HARD-LINER, HAD ON THIS OCCASION LISTENED CLOSELY. HE HAD BEEN VERY INTERESTED IN THE DEBATE WITHIN ISRAEL ON RESOLUTION 242, THE ROLE OF THE PALESTINIANS, AND THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE. ATHERTON POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT IT IS WRONG TO SAY THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RESPONSE IN ISRAEL TO THE SADAT INITIATIVE; IT HAD PRODUCED GREAT FERMENT. WHAT IS NECESSARY NOW IS FOR THE ARABS NOT TO LOSE PATIENCE. SAUD DID NOT HAVE A CLOSED MIND DURING THIS BRIEFING. SAUD SAID THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE NO POSITION ON THE NEGOTIATIONS, DO NOT WANT TO HAVE ONE, AND DO NOT WANT TO JOIN IN THEM. HOWEVER, ATHERTON COMMENTED, IF SADAT GOES IT ALONE ON A SEPARATE PEACE, THE SAUDIS WOULD BEGIN TO TURN AGAINST HIM.

9. ATHERTON SAID WE MUST GET A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES SINCE ALL REGARD IT AS A TEST OF WHETHER OR NOT THE SADAT INITIATIVE CAN PRODUCE ANYTHING. WE ALSO CANNOT EXPECT ISRAEL TO EITHER DISMANTLE THE SETTLEMENTS OR ADMIT THEIR ILLEGALITY; WE CAN ONLY HOPE TO GET THE ISRAELIS TO PUT A FREEZE ON FUTURE ACTIVITY AND TO TREAT THE EXISTING SETTLEMENTS AS OPEN TO NEGOTIATION. IF THE ISSUE WERE AN AGREEMENT IN SINAI ALONE, AND IF THE ISRAELIS WERE CONVINCED THAT SADAT IS READY TO SIGN A SEPARATE FINAL PEACE, THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO GIVE UP THE SETTLEMENTS AND THE AIRFIELDS AFTER A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

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10. ATHERTON CONTINUED THAT AT THIS POINT THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES IS NOT GOING TO BE ENOUGH TO BRING HUSSEIN INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS, (AND IN ANY CASE WE WILL NOT GET A DECLARATION IN WASHINGTON DURING THE BEGIN VISIT). WE WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO WORK ON AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 REGARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEST BANK SO AS TO GET HUSSEIN INTO THEM.

11. MEANWHILE, BEGIN WANTS THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE TO RECONVENE, BUT SADAT WILL NOT DECIDE ON THIS UNTIL AT LEAST AFTER HE SEES WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE BEGIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON. THE EGYPTIANS WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE THIS COMMITTEE REMAIN PERMANENTLY IN JERUSALEM. ATHERTON AND WEIR AGREED THAT POPULAR OPINION IN EGYPT WOULD GO ALONG VERY FAR WITH SADAT TOWARD A

SEPARATE PEACE.

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## Message Attributes

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